



## STATEMENTS & RELEASES

# Readout of Second Lady Karen Pence’s visit to MercyFirst in New York

## SOCIAL PROGRAMS

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Today, Second Lady Karen Pence visited MercyFirst, a non-profit human services agency, in Syosset, New York.

Upon arrival, Mrs. Pence was greeted by the MercyFirst staff and youth. Following the greeting, the Second Lady viewed an art exhibition titled, “Hope Holds No Borders: Children’s Art of Compassion and Inclusion.” The artwork, created by children who participated in the art therapy program at MercyFirst, was displayed at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City earlier this year. After viewing the artwork, the Second Lady joined an art therapy session with youth and reviewed a case summary to explore how art therapy positively impacted one of the youth who has participated in MercyFirst’s art therapy program. The visit concluded with the children showing Mrs. Pence the facility, including their meditation labyrinth garden.

“MercyFirst works with children who have been traumatized; grew up without parents; and teenagers who have lost hope for the future,” said Mrs. Pence. “I am encouraged by the stories I heard during today’s visit, which I believe illustrates the positive difference art therapy is making in these children’s lives. I applaud the art therapists at MercyFirst who are undoubtedly playing an important role in the healing of the children.”

“It is an honor and a pleasure to share with Mrs. Pence the work our youth are doing through art therapy for personal expression, healing, building community and reaching out to others,” said Eileen McGann, Director of the Arts and Creative Therapies. “We are very excited to have Mrs. Pence meet our youth and view work from our art exhibition Hope Holds No Borders: Children’s Art of Compassion and Inclusion at the United Nations.”

Jerry McCaffery, President and CEO of MercyFirst said, “We are honored to have Mrs. Pence come visit our campus and see first-hand the value that art therapy plays in promoting healing with the young people we work with.”

To stay updated on Mrs. Pence’s events, follow her on Twitter at, [@SecondLady](#).



Photo credit: Office of the Second Lady



Photo credit: Office of the Second Lady





## ABOUT ART THERAPY

Second Lady Karen Pence chose one initiative to champion, and it is art therapy. According to the American Art Therapy Association, art therapy is an integrative mental health and human services profession that enriches the lives of individuals, families, and communities through active art-making, creative process, applied psychological theory, and human experience within a psychotherapeutic relationship. Art therapy is facilitated by professional art therapists who are experts in human development, psychological, and counseling theories and techniques.

## ABOUT MERCYFIRST

MercyFirst is a non-profit social service agency that serves more than 3,000 children and families each year through programs located in in Brooklyn, Queens, Nassau and Suffolk Counties. Founded in 1894 by the Sisters of Mercy, MercyFirst provides an array of residential and community based programs in NYC and Long Island to children and their families involved in child welfare, mental health and the juvenile justice system. Programs include preventive services, family foster care, community-based group homes and mother-child residences, medical and mental health services, immigrant youth programs, Care Management and specialized residential treatment programs on its campus in Syosset. MercyFirst is accredited through the Council on Accreditation (COA) and is Sanctuary(c) Certified, a trauma-based approach in working with children, youth and families.